



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913

PH (517) 373.7708 | FAX (517) 373.1450

www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/gilbert/

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Contact: Jon Cool

517-373-7708

Local roads to receive more funding for repairs

LANSING – Local road projects around the state will be eligible for more funding under a new program created in legislation passed by the Senate today, said Sen. Jud Gilbert, chair of the Senate Transportation Committee.

Senate Bills 1132 and 1192 create the Local Roads Match Program, which will leverage federal funds to accelerate as many as 170 local road projects and create up to 7,100 jobs in the next two years.

“Michigan’s local roads are in need of repair to ensure the safety of all motorists and pedestrians. This program will allow those repairs to be made in a timely fashion,” said Gilbert, R-Algonac, sponsor of SB 1192. “I’m also pleased to say this program will help many Michigan residents get back on their feet by providing much needed jobs.”

The program will fund physical construction and construction engineering of local road projects. The required non-construction items such as preliminary engineering, right-of-way purchases and other environmental studies will have to be completed already and will not be funded through the program.

Priority will be given to the following:

- Projects designated as high priority projects ready to be constructed in 2006 or 2007.
- Local federal aid projects that can be advanced to construction in 2006.
- Local federal aid projects that are scheduled for construction in 2008, but can be advanced to 2007.

To ensure equitable distribution of funds, legislative oversight will require the Michigan Department of Transportation to make annual reports and a report when \$40 million has been expended by the program on the status of current and pending projects.

“It is important to help our local road agencies take advantage of this funding opportunity, and providing some oversight will help ensure the funds are distributed evenly around the state,” Gilbert said.